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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
MCT-01 SY-05 USSS-00 IO-13 HA-05 /095 W
----------041907 181202Z /23/43
P R 161550Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2255
INFO SECDEF WASHDC
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 1437

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS NL
SUBJECT: MOLUCCAN VIOLENCE: AFTERMATH

REF: THE HAGUE 1367 (DTG 141556 MAR 78

1. THE LIGHTNING ACTION BY THE MARINES WHICH SUCCESSFULLY ENDED THE LATEST ACT OF SOUTH MOLUCCAN TERRORISM HAS BEEN GREETED BY DEEP RELIEF AND PROFOUND SATISFACTION WITH THE DECISIVE WAY IN WHICH THE DUTCH AUTHORITIES MET THIS SUDDEN CRISIS. THE INITIAL PUBLIC REACTION TO THE SEIZURE OF THE PROVINCIEHUIS IN ASSEN BY THREE YOUNG TERRORISTS WAS SHARP, CHARACTERIZED BY MORE ANGER THAN HAD BEEN VISIBLE LAST MAY AFTER THE SEIZURE OF THE SCHOOL AND THE TRAIN IN THE SAME AREA. IT DEMONSTRATED THAT PATIENCE IS EXHAUSTED AND THAT PUBLIC OPINION IS NO LONGER PREPARED TO TOLERATE SOUTH MOLUCCAN VIOLENCE. THE OUTCOME IS SEEN AS PROOF THAT TERROR DES NOT PAY.

2. DESPITE THE HEIGHTENED REACTION, HOWEVER, THE GON STUCK TO THE TRADITIONAL POLICY THE AIM OF WHICH IS TO SAVE
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LIVES OF HOSTAGES AS WELL AS TERRORISTS. AS IN PREVIOUS CASES, THE GOVERNMENT CRISIS MACHINERY QUICKLY SETTLED DOWN FOR A POSSIBLY LONG NEGOTIATION. IT WAS THE INTEMPERATE BEHAVIOR OF THE TERRORISTS AND THE VIRTUAL CERTAINTY THAT THEY WERE ABOUT TO PROCEED WITH MULTIPLE EXECUTIONS THAT FORCED THE GOVERNMENT'S HAND AND CAUSED IT TO MOVE.

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3. THE ACTION SHOWED THAT THE DUTCH HAVE USED THEIR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE TO GOOD ADVANTAGE. THE NOW FAMILIAR SCENARIO WHICH WAS EXPLAINED IN DETAIL TO AMBASSADOR ISHAM AND THE US TERRORISM TEAM IN BRIEFINGS IN THE HAGUE LAST DECEMBER--UNFOLDED ALMOST ROUTINELY WITH THE CUSTOMARY PRECISION AND SPEED. THE SUCCESS OF THE ASSAULT, IN WHICH THE TERRORISTS WERE CAPTURED WITHOUT ANY FATAL CASUALTIES, DEMONSTRATED AGAIN HOW SUCCESSFULY THE AUTHORITIES HAVE MASTERED THEIR TASK.

4. THE GOVERNMENT RECEIVED UNIVERSAL SUPPORT FOR THE WAY IT HANDLED THE AFFAIR, BOTH IN PARLIAMENT AND IN THE PRESS. THERE WAS NO ECHO OF EARLIER CALLS TO AVOID MILITARY INTER-VENTION. FORMER PRIME MINISTER DEN UYL, STEPPING OUT OF HIS ROLE AS OPPOSITION LEADER, WAS THE FIRST TO PUBLICLY CONGRATULATE PRIME MINISTER VAN AGT. THE LATTER HANDLED HIMSELF WITH APLOMB, APPROPRIATELY SHARING THE SPOTLIGHT WITH NEW JUSTICE MINISTER DE RUITER WHO DURING THE CRISIS QUICKLY LEARNED TO OVERCOME AN INITIAL TENDENCY TO SAY MORE IN PUBLIC THAN WAS WISE.

5. IT REMAINS UNCLEAR WHERE THE TERRORISTS PLANNED TO GO IN THEIR GETAWAY PLANE. SOME HOSTAGES HAVE TOLD THE PRESS THAT THE TERRORISTS WERE TALKING ABOUT SOUTH YEMEN AND BENIN. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THIS WOULD HAVE SUCCEEDED.
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IN ANY CASE, THE TERRORISTS, BY THEIR THREATS AND ACTIONS, CREATED A SITUATION IN WHICH THEY COULD NOT GET AWAY.

6. UNLIKE LAST MAY, WHEN THE SOUTH MOLUCCAN COMMUNITY CLOSED RANKS BEHIND THE TERORISTS, SOUTH MOLUCCAN LEADERS HAVE DISSOCIATED THEMSELVES FROM THIS ACTION AND CONDEMNED IT. IT APPEARS THA THE THREE TERRORISTS WERE NOT WELL-KNOWN IN THEIR COMMUNITY AND WERE FRINGE FIGURES. THERE HAS ALSO BEEN TACIT APPROVAL BY THE SUTH MOLUCCAN COMMUNITY OF THE GOVERNMENT'S USE OF FORCE. THE FACT THAT THERE WERE NO CASUALTIES AMONG THE TERRORISTS HELPED.

7. THE GON HAS HASTENED TO MAKE CLEAR THAT IT REGARDS THE INCIDENT AS CAUSED BY ONLY A FEW YOUNG FANATICS AND THAT IT DOES NOT HOLD THE SOUTH MOLUCCAN COMMUNITY RESPONSIBLE. THERE WILL BE NO CHANGE IN THE POLICY OF NOT SUPPORTING SOUTH MOLUCCAN POLITICAL DEMANDS FOR REGAINING AN INDEPEN-DENT STATE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. THE GOVERNMENT WILL PROCEED, HOWEVER, WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED PLAN DESIGNED TO AID THE SOUTH MOLUCCAN COMMUNITY IN SETTLING PERMANENTLY IN THE NETHERLANDS. UNDER THIS PLAN, THE SOUTH MOLUCCANS CAN MAINTAIN THEIR CULTURAL

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IDENTITY BUT WILL BE GIVEN ASSISTANCE IN SCHOOLING,
HOUSING AND TRAINING.

8. WE HAVE DELIVERED HELPFUL AND TIMELY CONGRATULATORY
MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY TO FOREIGN MINISTER VAN DER
KLAAUW WHICH UNDERSCORES OUR SUPPORT FOR THE EFFORTS
OF THE GON TO DEAL WITH THE COMMON PROBLEM OF TERRORISM.
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